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W Y C O M B E
R U R A L D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND OF THE
CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

1955

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
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1955

Medical Officer of Health:
A.J. MUIR, M.B., Ch.B., B.Hy., D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector:
J.P. PERRY, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

WYCOMBE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

1955

Chairman:

Mr R.H. Dancer

Vice-Chairman:

Mr W.J. Tapping

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

at 1st May, 1955.

Chairman:

Mr G.B. Lee

The Chairman of the Council

The Vice-Chairman of the Council

The Ex-Chairman

The Chairman of the Finance Committee

The Chairman of the Public Works Committee

Mr F.L.E. Bradley

Mrs A.S. Laing

Mr H.W. Bristow

Mr H.E. Nixey

Rev. J D. Charlesworth

Mrs F.H. Pitcher

Mrs A.M. Conoley

Mr W.J. Pollard

Mr R.J. Field

Mrs D.M. Walker

Mr A. Fleet

Mrs K.R. Wheeler

Brig.Gen. E.S. Hoare-Nairne

Mrs C. Wontner

Mr R.M.E. Inchbald



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STAFF:

Medical Officer of Health:

A.J. MUIR, M.B., Ch.B., B.Hy., D.P.H.

(Also Area and Divisional School Medical Officer,
Buckinghamshire County Council.

Medical Officer of Health, High Wycombe Borough and
Marlow Urban District Council).

Deputy Medical Officer of Health:

R. HANDY, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.

(Also Assistant County Medical and School Medical
Officer, Buckinghamshire County Council).

Deputy Medical Officer of Health, High Wycombe
Borough and Marlow Urban District Council).

Chief Sanitary Inspector:

J.P. PERRY, M.R. San.I., M.S.I.A. Meat Certificate.

Sanitary Inspectors:

D.J. SULLIVAN, M.S.I.A.

T. LAWSON, C.R.S.I.

S.A. LATIMER, C.R.S.I.

Clerk:

MISS R.M. SPENCER

Rodent Operative:

E.V. BOWLER.

WYCOMBE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Public Health Department,
28, High Street,
High Wycombe.

October, 1956.

To the Chairman and Members of
the Wycombe Rural District Council.

Mr Chairman, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my report for the
year 1955.

The Registrar General's estimate of the population
in mid 1955 was 42,910 which was an increase of 810 on
the figure for the previous year. There was an excess
of 279 births over deaths this being the natural increase
in the population, the remaining 531 being due to inward
migration.

During 1955 there were 683 live births, 18 less than
last year. The rate per thousand population, which takes
into account an increase of 800 in the total population,
fell from 16.6 in 1954 to 15.9 in 1955.

There was one more infant death than last year, the
infant mortality rate rising from 27.1 to 29.3. It should
be remembered, however, that the infant mortality rate is
not a statistically accurate picture of the present state
of affairs. Some of the infants who died during 1955 were
in fact born in 1954, when as already stated the total
births were greater in number and there was therefore a
greater total of infants at risk.

The number of deaths in the district was 404 - 25 more
than the previous year. Diseases of the heart and circula-
tion again accounted for the greatest number of deaths.
The deaths from tuberculosis totalled the same as last year
but again there was a reduced incidence of new cases.

The B.C.G. vaccination of a selected group of school children was completed during the year. The group chosen consisted of children born in 1942, and parents were invited to give their consent to their being vaccinated. As a preliminary the pupils were tuberculin tested and negative reactors were given the vaccine. The vaccine was made available to pupils of all schools whether private or maintained, the percentage of acceptances was approximately eighty and there were no untoward results of the vaccination. The selection of the 13 year age group was justified by the fact that tuberculosis is a particular danger to adolescents so that immunisation is desirable for young people about to leave school and ready to go into industry. There is every indication that this is a most valuable procedure.

Of other infectious diseases, measles was the subject of over 92% of all notifications. This condition was reported in no less than 1,231 individuals, 227 of these notifications related to children under the age of 2 years, in whom the disease carried the most serious prognosis. Even so measles caused no fatalities. This pleasing fact is probably due largely to the use of modern antibiotics which effectively combat the complications, for the complications rather than the disease itself are the dangers of measles.

Poliomyelitis occurred in 4 persons but in none of them was the disease fatal. The sinister impact of poliomyelitis is not, however, measured only in terms of mortality, but also in residual permanent morbidity. This permanent disability accounts for much of the terror which this disease arouses in the public. It is worth while noting, therefore, that of the 4 notified cases only one was paralytic.

There were again no notifications of diphtheria. Whooping cough - the other major infectious disease of infancy against which effective immunisation is possible - was notified on only 58 occasions. With the increasing practice of immunisation it is to be hoped that in the foreseeable future the first sentence of this paragraph may be extended to include both diphtheria and whooping cough.

In conclusion I thank my colleagues for their assistance during the year and I should like to mention particularly the Chief Sanitary Inspector and the other Sanitary Inspectors for their energetic service. A special meed of praise is due to Miss Spencer who does the entire clerical work of the Department.

A.J. MUIR
Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS.

Area in acres.....	71,232
Population (1951 census).....	39,352
Registrar General's Estimate of population mid-1955	42,910
No. of inhabited houses on rate book (31st March, 1955)	13,825
Rateable Value as at 31st March, 1956.....	£283,027
Estimated Product of Penny Rate.....	£1,085

EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS

FOR THE YEAR 1955.

BIRTHS.

		<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Live Births	Legitimate	341	309	650
	Illegitimate	14	19	33
	Totals	355	328	683
Still Births	Legitimate	8	4	12
	Illegitimate	0	0	0
	Totals	8	4	12

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the Estimated Population.....	15.9
Comparability Factor - Birth Rate.....	1.02
Adjusted local Birth Rate.....	16.22
Birth Rate of England and Wales.....	15.0
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 births live and still.....	17.3
Still Birth Rate of England and Wales per 1,000 births live and still....	23.2

DEATHS.

Number of Deaths	-	Males	-	222
		Females	-	182
		Total	-	<u>404</u>

Death Rate per 1,000 of the Estimated Population.	9.4
Comparability Factor.....	0.94
Adjusted Local Death Rate.....	8.8
Death Rate of England and Wales.....	11.7
Tuberculosis Death Rate, Wycombe Rural District..	0.09
Tuberculosis Death Rate, Total County.....	0.06

INFANT MORTALITY.

20 infants died under the age of one year.

	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate.....	13	6	19
Illegitimate.....	0	1	1
Totals.....	13	7	20

This represents a mortality rate of 29.3 per 1,000 related births, compared with 24.9 as a general figure for England and Wales.

Neo-natal mortality rate - 24.9, compared with a county rate of 15.5.

MATERNAL DEATHS.

- (a) From puerperal sepsis..... 0
- (b) From other maternal causes 0

TABLE OF DEATHS.

<u>DISEASE.</u>	<u>MALES.</u>	<u>FEMALES.</u>	<u>TOTAL.</u>
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory.....	1	3	4
2. Tuberculosis, other.....	0	0	0
3. Syphilitic diseases.....	1	0	1
4. Diphtheria.....	0	0	0
5. Whooping Cough.....	0	0	0
6. Meningococcal Infections.....	1	0	0
7. Acute Poliomyelitis.....	0	0	0
8. Measles.....	0	0	0
9. Other infectious diseases.....	0	2	2
10. Cancer, stomach.....	8	1	9
11. Cancer, lungs.....	11	1	12
12. Cancer, breast.....	0	6	6
13. Cancer, uterus.....	0	4	4
14. Other cancers.....	25	6	31
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia.....	0	3	3
16. Diabetes.....	0	3	3
17. Vascular lesions, nervous system..	26	37	63
18. Coronary disease, angina.....	43	28	71
19. Hypertension with heart disease...	6	4	10
20. Other heart diseases.....	18	23	41
21. Other circulatory diseases.....	13	13	26
22. Influenza.....	1	2	3
23. Pneumonia.....	13	13	26
24. Bronchitis.....	8	2	10
25. Other respiratory diseases.....	2	2	4
26. Gastric and duodenal ulcer.....	4	1	5
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	1	1	2
28. Nephritis, nephrosis.....	0	1	1
29. Hyperplasia of prostate.....	4	0	4
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion...	0	0	0

TABLE OF DEATHS. (contd)

<u>DISEASE.</u>	<u>MALES.</u>	<u>FEMALES.</u>	<u>TOTAL.</u>
31. Congenital malformations.....	6	1	7
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases.....	16	18	34
33. Motor vehicle accidents.....	5	2	7
34. Other accidents.....	7	4	11
35. Suicide.....	2	1	3
36. Homicide and operations of war...	0	0	0
All causes..	222	182	404

MATERNAL MORTALITY.

	<u>Rates per 1,000 Total (Live and Still) Births.</u>	
	<u>England and Wales.</u>	<u>Wycombe Rural District.</u>
(a) Maternal causes, excluding abortion.....		0
(d) Due to abortion.....		0
(c) Total maternal mortality....	0.64	0

CANCER DEATHS.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages):-

Males.....	44
Females.....	18
Total.....	<u>62</u>

Yearly comparison of cancer deaths:-

1955.....	62
1954.....	61
1953.....	76
1952.....	72
1951.....	72
1950.....	77

The following organs were affected:-

Stomach.....	9
Lungs.....	12
Breast.....	6
Uterus.....	4
Other Sites.....	31
Total.....	<u>62</u>

TUBERCULOSIS DEATHS.

Tuberculosis Death Rate (all cases).....	0.09
Total Deaths - Respiratory Tuberculosis.....	4
Respiratory Tuberculosis Death Rate.....	0.09
Total Deaths - Non-Respiratory Tuberculosis.....	0
Non-Respiratory Tuberculosis Death Rate.....	0.00
Total Deaths - Respiratory (excluding Tuberculosis)....	40
Respiratory Death Rate (excluding Tuberculosis).....	0.90

POPULATIONS, BIRTH AND MORTALITY RATES FOR THE YEAR 1955

District	Population Census 1951	Registrar-General's estimated Population Mid-1955.	Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	Crude Death Rate per 1,000 Population	Tuberculosis Death Rate per 1,000 Population	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Births	Neo-Natal Mortality Rate per 1,000 Births	Maternal Mortality per 1,000 live and still- births.
Bucks County	386,164	410,400	15.4	9.8	0.06	20.0	15.5	0.31
Total Urban	193,168	202,400	15.3	9.5	0.07	18.1	14.2	0.0
Total Rural	192,996	208,000	15.5	10.0	0.04	21.7	16.8	0.61
Wycombe Rural	39,352	42,910	15.9	9.4	0.09	29.3	24.9	0.0
England and Wales.			15.0	11.7	0.15	24.9	17.3	0.64

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS) 1955.

Disease	Total Cases Notified	Age Periods						
		Under 1 year	1-2	3-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25+
Scarlet Fever	18	-	2	4	9	3	-	-
Whooping Cough	58	6	10	15	22	3	-	2
Acute Poliomyelitis:								
Paralytic	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Non-Paralytic	3	-	-	1	-	1	1	-
Measles	1,231	27	200	257	651	62	17	9
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Acute Pneumonia	8	-	-	-	2	-	-	6
Dysentery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Smallpox	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Acute Encephalitis:								
Infective	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post Infectious	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enteric or Typhoid Fever	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paratyphoid Fevers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Erysipelas	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Meningococcal Infection	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Food Poisoning	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals:	1,328	33	213	277	684	70	18	25
								8

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1955.

(a) (b)

Age Periods	New Cases			Deaths		
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	1	-	-	-	-
10	-	3	-	-	-	-
15	-	1	-	-	-	-
25	3	1	1	1	-	-
35	1	1	-	-	-	-
45	2	-	-	-	-	-
55	1	-	-	-	-	-
65+	1	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	8	6	1	6	1	3

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

Immunisation against diphtheria (and, where desirable whooping-cough), is carried out in Schools and Infant Welfare Centres in your district, the arrangements being made by the County Council. It is also possible for parents to arrange for this to be done by their own doctors. Records of immunisation are kept at the County Offices.

During 1955 530 children were immunised against diphtheria and 467 against whooping-cough. 706 children received reinforcing doses against diphtheria.

VACCINATION AGAINST SMALLPOX.

During the year 435 primary vaccinations and 78 re-vaccinations were carried out.

HOSPITALS.

The available hospitals in the District are the High Wycombe War Memorial Hospital, Booker Hospital, Amersham General Hospital, Maidenhead Isolation Hospital, Canadian Red Cross Hospital, Taplow; Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury Isolation Hospital, Royal Bucks Hospital, Aylesbury; The Radcliffe Infirmary, Churchill Hospital and The Slade Hospital, Oxford; and the Battle Hospital, Reading.

AMBULANCE SERVICES.

The ambulance arrangements pertinent to your area, are as follows:

A new station situated at West End Street, High Wycombe, was opened during the year. This serves the major portion of the district.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

Section 47 - No formal action.

DETAILS OF WATER SUPPLY.

I am indebted to your Engineer & Surveyor for the following table:-

Parish	Supplied direct by pipes into houses.		Supplied by Standpipes.	
	No. of Houses.	Estimated Population.	No. of Houses.	Estimated Population.
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton.	532	1,755	10	35
Bradenham.....	36	119	-	-
Chepping Wycombe Rural.	1,989	6,564	46	152
Ellesborough.....	258	851	7	23
Fawley.....	53	175	6	20
Fingest.....	547	1,805	25	84
Hambleton.....	406	1,340	17	60
Hampden, Gt & Lt.....	97	320	8	26
Hedsor.....	37	122	1	3
Hughenden.....	1,482	4,800	25	85
Ibstone.....	91	301	4	13
Kimble, Gt & Lt.....	247	814	2	7
Lacey Green.....	356	1,175	13	45
Longwick-cum-Ilmer.....	156	515	2	7
Marlow, Great.....	425	1,402	31	106
Marlow, Little.....	256	845	9	30
Medmenham.....	115	380	7	22
Radnage.....	156	515	3	9
Princes Risborough.....	1,657	5,468	5	17
Stokenchurch.....	761	2,511	9	29
Turville.....	101	334	16	53
West Wycombe Rural.....	552	1,822	14	46
Wooburn.....	2,047	6,755	34	116
Totals.....	12,357	40,688	294	988

I am also indebted to your Engineer & Surveyor for the following figures:-

CESSPOOL EMPTYING 1955.

<u>Parish.</u>	<u>No. of gallons of sewage removed.</u>
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton.....	947,050
Bradenham.....	9,000
Chepping Wycombe Rural.....	7,211,900
Ellesborough.....	651,550
Fawley.....	42,400
Fingest.....	1,226,700
Hambleton.....	690,400
Hampden, Gt & Lt.....	159,950
Hughenden.....	3,557,150
Ibstone.....	260,650
Kimble, Gt & Lt.....	469,850
Lacey Green.....	942,865
Longwick-cum-Ilmer.....	656,750
Marlow, Gt.....	627,250
Marlow, Lt.....	166,650
Medmenham.....	198,850
Princes Risborough.....	195,550
Radnage.....	473,250
Stokenchurch.....	3,227,500
Turville.....	192,250
West Wycombe Rural.....	1,167,450
Wooburn.....	5,399,850
Total.....	<u>28,474,815</u>

RAINFALL, 1955.

I am indebted to the Director of the Forest Products Research Laboratory, Princes Risborough, for the following particulars of rainfall recorded during 1955.

Rainfall recorded at Princes Risborough

Station: 333 feet above sea level.

Month	Monthly Rain-fall	No. of days on which rain fell with .01 or more measured.	Largest Rainfall	
			Date	Amount
January...	2.05	17	16th	0.36
February..	1.56	18	6th	0.35
March.....	1.09	10	22nd	0.31
April.....	0.68	9	7th	0.28
May.....	4.64	18	16th	0.86
June.....	3.15	11	11th	0.74
July.....	0.78	3	14th	0.56
August....	0.54	9	2nd	0.17
September.	2.01	13	22nd	0.90
October...	2.58	11	19th	0.89
November..	1.62	13	3rd	0.45
December..	2.66	22	14th	0.48
Totals....	23.36	154		

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT, 1955.

Public Health Department,
28, High Street,
High Wycombe.

To the Chairman and Members of
the Wycombe Rural District Council.

Mr Chairman, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Herewith I beg to submit a Summary of the work carried
out by the Department in the year 1955.

I am,

Mr Chairman, My Lord,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J.P. PERRY

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

FOREWORD.

Once again it is necessary to collate information for another annual report. The information could be presented in statistical fashion only, a method which excites little interest and tends to obscure the value of work accomplished and the targets at which we are aiming in order to achieve healthy living conditions.

The civic contribution towards improving environmental hygiene as evidenced in the control and prevention of defects and bad conditions, provision of houses and cleansing services and protection of food and water supplies to mention but a few of the functions is, no matter how excellently performed, not in itself sufficient to secure healthy living conditions. A first essential is that public opinion must support the demand for improvements and in this respect it is to be hoped that annual reports assist in the stimulation of public interest to an awareness of present shortcomings.

Notwithstanding the improvements secured, constant and insistent attention is needed in order to achieve and maintain a satisfactory environment. Atmospheric pollution, bad housing conditions, food poisoning and recent legislative measures such as the Clean Air Bill, The Housing Repairs & Rents Act 1954 and the Food Hygiene Regulations 1955 are matters which bring sharply to focus the necessity for this insistent vigilance in the field of environmental hygiene.

It is in dealing with such matters that your sanitary officers duties receive their evaluation. The work is reflected to some extent in the report submitted under the following sections:-

Section 'A'	HOUSING
Section 'B'	WATER SUPPLIES
Section 'C'	SANITATION
Section 'D'	PEST INFESTATION CONTROL
Section 'E'	SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES
Section 'F'	FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS
Section 'G'	MISCELLANEOUS

SECTION 'A'

HOUSING.

Review and Present Action.

The housing problem has again been a predominating factor in the affairs of your Council.

In succeeding post war annual reports I have drawn attention to the difficulties experienced concerning the repair of unfit houses, and have reiterated that the problem has been related to shortage of housing accommodation, legislative difficulties and more particularly to the economic factor in respect of controlled rents, rising building costs and heavy dilapidations consequent upon the enforced neglect during the war years.

Throughout these years your sanitary officers have generally had to pursue the policy of securing first aid repairs to sub-standard properties and preventing re-occupation of unfit houses when vacated.

As indicated in previous reports there were signs that with the progress of new housing wider recognition was being given to the necessity to preserve and improve older property. This was confirmed by the publication of a Government White Paper entitled "Houses - The Next Step", and by the introduction of the Housing Repairs & Rents Act 1954.

The new legislation required all local authorities to resume the full exercise of their powers in connection with slum clearance and to submit to the Minister of Housing & Local Government by the 30th of August, 1955, proposals for dealing with unfit houses in their districts.

These requirements have largely determined the pattern of your officers' work for the year 1955, necessitating survey of properties in connection with the preparation of a programme for submission to the Minister and instituting action in order that your Council could deal progressively with unfit houses in the district.

As a result your Council submitted a programme to the Minister undertaking to take action in respect of certain unfit houses within a period of five years, electing to deal with them as individual unfit houses rather than adopting clearance area procedure.

Your Council's objective has been to encourage owners to repair houses rather than to demolish. This target is often difficult to achieve, as prolonging the life of obsolete and worn out houses is financially unattractive to owners having regard to the low rents and heavy dilapidations.

In cases where owners have not been responsive in submitting proposals to execute works to make their houses fit for human habitation, your Council have been called upon to consider the question of the making of demolition or closing orders. Decisions in this connection are often complicated by the human problems associated with the occupancies of unfit houses, as evidenced by certain aged persons not wishing to move away from dwellings in which they have lived for many years and by other persons in low income groups not wishing to remove to a Council house and pay higher rents.

These co-related factors have justified the very full consideration which your Authority have given to each individual case before making a final decision regarding the demolition or closure of an unfit house. Despite the difficulties enumerated many owners have eventually undertaken to repair their properties, factors contributing to such results being the patience exercised by your Council when considering these cases and the guidance given to owners in the determination of their problems.

Improvement Grants.

During the year under review few owners of unfit houses have obtained improvement grants to assist them to recondition their dwellings. Generally the owners of low rented sub-standard houses are not interested in improvement grants. Improvement work makes necessary contingent repairs and this factor allied to the rent increase permitted have made the grants unattractive to the owners of sub-standard dwellings. Even if local authorities when fixing the new rent, were to meet this by going above the present levels it is doubtful whether many tenants would agree to the improvements being done.

It is to be remembered that improvement grants are of a permissive and not mandatory character, and that both the owner and a tenant of a house must be willing partners to an arrangement to improve a dwelling.

Rents.

Certain provisions of the Housing Repairs & Rents Act 1954 deal with rent increases subject to prescribed conditions being fulfilled. The new policy of relating rent increases to fitness of property has encouraged some owners, particularly owners of properties already in good repair, to serve rent increase notices and use the additional income towards the cost of maintaining their properties in a satisfactory condition.

Generally, however, landlords of poor properties will not risk serving rent increase notices. Such notices may result in tenants applying for certificates of disrepair whereby a landlord would lose not only the repairs increase under the Act of 1954, but also, if the dwelling is old controlled, the increases of rent permitted by the Act of 1920, and, furthermore be requested by the local authority to execute work at considerable expense.

Unless, therefore, landlords of sub-standard properties can afford considerable expenditure at the outset they have little opportunity of securing rental increases.

Standards.

In endeavouring to repair and improve the older houses varying housing standards are now applicable according to the especial circumstances of the case. These standards are

- (1) A penal minimum standard which is to be considered in relation to securing repair or demolition of and unfit house, (this does not require the provision of a hot water supply and bathroom).
- (2) A good repair standard in connection with permitted rent increases in controlled rents, (this also does not require hot water supply and bathroom to be provided but is a slightly higher standard than the penal standard).
- (3) The standard for improvement and conversion of a dwelling house requiring among other provisions the installation of a hot water supply and bathroom. (The new Act amends the provisions of the 1949 Housing Act and reduces the period for which dwellings to be improved must provide satisfactory accommodation, to a 15 years minimum. For this purpose the full 16 point standard of fitness has been reduced to a 12 point standard. This standard is undoubtedly a lower one).

The penal standard has reference to constructional details, omitting consideration of such matters as hot water supply, bath, internal water closet and heating facilities.

This is to be regretted as such facilities are essential in order to provide a satisfactory unit of housing accommodation for the present day family.

Re-housing Problems.

Whilst it is a condition of approval of a clearance order that the local authority must be prepared in advance of displacement to provide housing accommodation for the occupants, such is not the case in connection with an individual demolition order or closing order and there exists only a moral obligation on a local authority to re-house the occupants of houses subject to such orders.

Many local authorities re-house as a matter of routine all straightforward cases involving occupants in condemned individual properties. In such circumstances an owner may put forward proposals for the repair and reconditioning of a vacated condemned house, subsequently obtaining a revocation of the demolition order and enjoying the privilege of selling the property in the open market. Although this means the recovery of an otherwise unsatisfactory housing unit it involves the local authority in the expense of re-housing a tenant.

On the other hand if a tenant remains in occupation of a sub-standard house at an uneconomic rental, reconditioning is financially unattractive to the owner and action must proceed to secure its demolition.

Such matters are some of the many aspects of the housing problem which your Council are called upon to deal with.

Conclusion.

The Housing Repairs & Rents Act 1954, was introduced in an effort to improve the millions of houses which had many years of useful life in them. Financial attractions, a new standard of fitness for human habitation, increases in rents and easier improvement grants have been introduced in order to achieve this target.

Doubts have already been expressed about the adequacy of the new legislation in connection with the achievement of such objectives. These limitations emphasise the onerous duties confronting local authorities in dealing with unfit houses, and provide a challenge for all engaged in this work to make the best possible use of the powers available in order to secure the maintenance and rescue of existing houses where possible and their demolition and replacement where necessary.

Summary of Inspections, Notices Served, etc.

A summary of the action taken under the Housing and Public Health Acts is recorded herewith:-

Inspections under the Housing Acts, 1936/53.....	7
Re-inspections.....	875
Inspections under the Public Health Act, 1936.....	437
Re-inspections.....	475
Number of interviews with owners with respect to repairs, reconditioning, future user of houses.....	492
Number of Certificates of Disrepair issued.....	6
Number of Certificates revoked.....	Nil

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Action under Statutory Powers during the year:-

(a) Proceedings under Section 9, 10 & 16 of the Housing Act 1936:-

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs (informal notices)..... | 14 |
| (2) | Number of dwelling houses in respect of which formal notices were served requiring repairs..... | Nil |
| (3) | Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of notice..... | 14 |

(b) Proceedings under Section 11, 12 & 13 of the Housing Act 1936:-

- | | | |
|-----|---|----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling houses dealt with under Section 11 of the Housing Act 1936..... | 55 |
| (2) | Number of dwelling houses in respect of which demolition orders were made..... | 19 |
| (3) | Number of dwelling houses the subject of undertakings not to use for human habitation when vacated..... | 16 |
| (4) | Number of dwelling houses the subject of undertakings to repair..... | 19 |
| (5) | Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders..... | 3 |
| (6) | Number of dwelling houses repaired as a result of undertakings given by owners..... | 12 |

(c) Proceedings under Section 5 of the Housing Repairs & Rents Act, 1954:-

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| (1) | Houses reconstructed, enlarged or improved and Demolition Orders revoked..... | 6 |
|-----|---|---|

(d) Proceedings under Public Health Act, 1936:-

- | | | |
|-----|---|----|
| (1) | Houses in which defects were remedied after the service of informal/formal notices..... | 35 |
|-----|---|----|

SECTION 'B'

WATER SUPPLIES.

Both private companies and local authorities have within the statutory limits of supply installed water mains throughout the district.

These water undertakings are as follows:-

1. Wycombe Rural District Council
2. Wycombe Borough Council.
3. The Rickmansworth & Uxbridge Valley Water Company.
4. The Amersham, Beaconsfield & District Water Company.
5. The Marlow Water Company.
6. The Bucks Water Board.

Sampling on a comprehensive scale was continued at Ilmer in order to determine the wholesomeness of the well water supplies in that area. Water from some of the wells was found to be subject to contamination and subsequently a water main was extended to this hamlet.

Despite the network of water mains in the district occupiers of many houses still derive their water from wells and rainwater tanks. This is attributable in some cases to the isolation of individual houses, in other cases to the occupiers' reluctance to incur the cost of a main water supply and in other instances to their prejudice in favour of the private supplies which are often considered to have better qualities than a main water supply.

Surveillance of water supplies has continued throughout the year. Of the 90 samples taken during the year and submitted for chemical/bacteriological examination 26 were reported upon as not conforming to a satisfactory standard and owners were accordingly requested to provide a wholesome and sufficient water supply.

Your Council's water supply serving the parishes of Stokenchurch, Radnage and parts of Bledlow-cum-Saunderton and Bradenham and derived from the boreholes at Lower Road, Bennett End, Radnage, has been regularly checked at source. All samples submitted for examination have been reported upon as conforming to a satisfactory standard of purity.

SECTION 'C'

SANITATION.

The predominating form of drainage in the district is cesspool drainage. The few areas enjoying main drainage are Princes Risborough and small parts of the rural district adjacent to the Borough of High Wycombe and Marlow Urban District.

Deficiencies in connection with the dry conservancy system and cesspool drainage are well known and need no reiteration. Complaints arising from such systems have again claimed the attention of your officers.

It is pleasing therefore to anticipate the implementation at an early date of your Council's Consulting Engineers' Schemes for the main drainage at Wooburn Valley and part of Hambleden Parish. It is to be regretted that the provision of main drainage on a more comprehensive scale is limited by economic policy at national level, as the necessity for a satisfactory planned system for the disposal of the waste products of human living become more evident with the development taking place in the district.

SECTION 'D'

PEST INFESTATION CONTROL.

The necessity to protect humans from the menace of rats and mice arising from transmission of disease and enormous damage to foodstuffs, is reflected in the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949, which is an important instrument in the campaign for the destruction of rodents. This legislation clearly defines the duties of owners and occupiers of premises and local authorities in the work of pest destruction.

It cannot be over emphasised that the success of this work is to a great extent dependent upon co-operation from the public. This co-operation can be translated into action by occupiers carrying out their statutory duty of notifying the local authority when rats and mice are living on or resorting to their land in substantial numbers. It is pleasing to record that occupiers are becoming increasingly aware of this responsibility and accordingly giving the requisite notice when infestations occur.

Since the introduction of the Prevention of Damage by pests Act the planned campaign for the destruction of rodents by trained personnel, use of special equipment, employment of methods of poisoning, fumigation and trapping has continued in succeeding years resulting generally in a decrease of infestations which trend of progress is reflected in your Council's area.

Such a result does not justify complacency in this matter. Having regard to the prolific breeding rate of rodents the utmost vigilance is needed in order to maintain and improve upon the results which have been achieved after years of intensive rodent control work.

The South Bucks & East Berks Workable Area Committee, of which your Council is a constituent member, has continued its excellent work particularly as a co-ordinating factor between local authorities and other associations and bodies engaged in the work of pest control.

Throughout the year your Council's rodent control service has been called upon to function at various premises including dwelling houses, factories, food stores, offices and refuse tips. Details of the work carried out during the year are set forth in the accompanying table.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949.

Type of Property	Local Authority	Dwelling Houses. (including Council Houses)	All other (including Business Premises).	Total	Agricultural.
I. Number of properties in Local Authority's District.	13	13,300	760	14,073	325
II. Number of properties inspected as a result of (a) notification (b) survey under the Act or (c) otherwise.	(a) - (b) 13 (c) -	253 415 2,100	10 161 548	263 629 2,648	- 91 12
III. Total inspections carried out - including re-inspections.	71	2,992	1,340	4,403	143
IV. Number of properties inspected (in Sec.II) which were found to be infested by: (a) Rats Major Minor (b) Mice Major Minor	- 5 - -	- 278 - 23	- 43 - 9	- 326 - 32	- 10 1 -
V. Number of infested properties (in Sec. IV) treated by the Local Authority.	5	271	28	304	-
VI. Total treatments carried out - including re-treatments.	9	315	42	366	-

SECTION 'E'

SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES.

Introduction.

The year 1955 was noteworthy for the introduction of the Food & Drugs Act 1955, this legislation consolidating the Food & Drugs Act 1938, The Food & Drugs (Milk, Dairies & Artificial Cream) Act, 1950, and the Food & Drugs (Amendment) Act, 1954, together with certain sections of the Slaughter-houses Act, 1954, and the Slaughter of Animals (Amendment) Act, 1954.

The new Act empowered the Ministers to make regulations for many important matters and this power has been exercised by the production of the Food Hygiene Regulations designed to secure the observance of sanitary and cleanly conditions and practices in connection with the sale and preparation of food for human consumption.

The attainment of such objectives cannot be achieved by enforcing legislation, but rather by an educative process, and in this connection it is interesting to note how the public attitude in respect of food hygiene is finding stronger expression.

Public interest is most welcome to local authorities and their officers engaged in administrative work in this sphere of environmental hygiene, for an informed and discriminating public can accomplish much towards securing satisfactory standards.

Cafes, Restaurants and Food Shops.

The hygiene of food premises and food handlers has been regarded as a matter of primary importance. Copies of the new Food Hygiene Regulations have been circulated to all food traders in the district and visits made in order to stimulate interest and encourage the adoption of standards which will result in improved conditions and practices.

Matters dealt with have included design of premises, ventilation and lighting, standards of cleanliness with respect to food rooms and utensils, hot and cold water supplies, drainage, storage of food and freedom from insect and vermin infestation.

The work of the department in this connection is summarised herewith:-

Number of visits to food premises.....	763
Food rooms redecorated.....	37
Food rooms repaired (floors, walls, ceilings, windows).	26
Wash basins provided.....	12
New sanitary accommodation provided.....	6
Provision of constant hot water supply.....	5
Rodent infestation dealt with.....	15
Additional ventilation provided.....	7
Refuse receptacles provided.....	11

Ice-cream.

Ice-cream still maintains its popularity and sales continue to increase.

The necessity to safeguard the public against possible dangers arising from the contamination of this food has long been recognised by the trade itself and is given further recognition by way of legislation. Provision is made for the registration of premises and conditions controlling the manufacture, storage and selling of the commodity.

Altogether 73 premises are registered for the sale of ice-cream and 8 new applications for registration were approved during the year under review. In nearly all cases the ice-cream is sold in a pre-packed condition.

In administering the relevant legislation your officers have been called upon to deal with matters relating to suitability of premises, trade equipment, methods of manufacture and sampling for the purpose of bacteriological examination.

Samples taken and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory Service for examination have been subjected to the methylene blue test, and subsequently classified in accordance with the Ministry of Health's recommended scheme for the grading of ice-cream. All the samples conformed to a satisfactory standard.

Milk.

In the preceding annual report I drew attention to an order made by Parliament whereby twelve areas including the Wycombe Rural District became specified areas within which only heat-treated or "Tuberculin Tested" milk could be sold. This Order came into operation on the 1st March, 1955. The changes incurred by the introduction of the order caused little disturbance in connection with the distribution of milk within your Council's area.

Administration of legislation with regard to milk production and distribution has, generally speaking, continued to be carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries and local authorities respectively.

Your Council's statutory duties have again been related to the distribution of milk, necessitating registration of dairies and dairymen, issuing supplementary licences for the sale of designated milk and helping to ensure that milk may be consumed by the public with safety.

Infected milk has again claimed attention. As the result of reports received in connection with milk infected with disease communicable to man, investigation was necessary in 31 cases. Measures were taken to ensure that the milk was heat-treated before sale for human consumption.

The following information relates to administrative work in connection with the Milk & Dairies Act & Regulations:-

Number of visits to dairy premises.....	106
" " cases of milk infected with tubercle bacilli.	4
" " " " " " brucella.....	27
" " registered dairies.....	10
New dairy premises registered.....	Nil
Number of dealers licences issued to use designation "Pasteurised".....	22
" " " " issued to use designation "Tuberculin Tested".....	20
" " supplementary licences issued to use designation "Pasteurised".....	5
" " " licences issued to use designation "Tuberculin Tested"....	7
" " licences issued to use designation "Sterilised"	6
" " milk samples taken for biological examination	3

Investigations.

Complaints have been received from time to time relating to dirty milk bottles. These matters have been investigated and appropriate action taken in order to prevent a recurrence of such incidents.

In another case extraneous matter was found in a box of chocolates. No summary proceedings were instituted following investigation of this occurrence.

Notification was also received in connection of the delivery into your district of egg albumen which had formed part of a consignment in which organisms of the salmonella group had been isolated.

The occupier of the premises concerned was interviewed and subsequently the egg albumen in his possession was destroyed.

Meat Inspection.

With the decontrol of meat in 1954 your Council were called upon to ensure that adequate slaughtering accommodation was available for the district. Subsequently your Council licensed five slaughterhouses.

The licensing of these premises is for an interim period pending the Government's decision in connection with the long term policy for moderate concentration of slaughtering.

The deciding factor on how many slaughterhouses can be retained will depend on the number which can be made to conform with a standard which is yet to be prescribed by Regulation.

It is pleasing to record that the occupiers of the licensed slaughterhouses have been most co-operative in their efforts to maintain satisfactory food hygiene standards in relation to the condition of the premises and the methods employed in preparing the carcasses.

The Slaughter of Animals Act 1933 to 1954 requiring the stunning of animals by means of mechanically operated instruments, and the licensing by the local authority of slaughtermen together with other rules relating to slaughterhouse practices claimed the attention of your officers. These enactments have generally been well observed.

All animals killed in the slaughterhouses within your Council's area have been examined by your officers.

The amount of meat condemned has again shown a downward trend. This no doubt is primarily due to selective buying by the butchers and purchase of animals reared locally resulting in a minimum of transportation and bruising.

Details relating to the animals slaughtered and inspected are set forth in the table on Page 34.

Weights of Canned and Other Foods
Condemned as Unfit for Human Consumption.

(lbs)

Canned Meat	Canned Fruit	Canned Vegetables
561	22½	6½
Imported Beef	Margarine	Cheese
80	11½	5
Total Weight:- 6 cwt. 14½ lbs.		

MEAT.

Carcases inspected and condemned.

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	348	46	117	832	928	-
Number inspected	348	46	117	832	928	-
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis & Cysticerci:-</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	2	1	2	2	-
Part carcass or organ condemned	36	7	-	58	114	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	10.3%	15.6%	.35%	7.2%	12.5%	-
<u>Tuberculosis only:-</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part carcass or organ condemned	18	5	-	-	3	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	5.2%	10.9%	-	-	.32%	-
<u>Cysticercosis:-</u>						
Part carcass or organ condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses refrigerated	-	-	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-	-

These figures represent a total carcass weight condemned of 9 cwt. 74 lbs and weight of offal 12 cwt. 74 lbs.

SECTION 'F'.

FACTORIES AND WORKPLACES.

H.M. Inspector of Factories and District Councils have divided responsibility in administering the provisions of the Factories Acts 1937 & 1948.

Matters claiming your officers' attention have included means of escape in case of fire, water supplies, sanitary accommodation and drainage. Investigations have also been necessary from time to time in order to deal with complaints of nuisances arising from smoke emission.

There is a danger that the discharge of smoke may be regarded as the problem of towns and cities and not that of rural areas. Complacency in this matter is unjustified having regard to the expansion of industry which may intrude into rural areas. Such intrusion may well bring new problems to the local authorities of these areas particularly in connection with the emission of smoke and fumes from new manufacturing processes.

Employers in pursuance of the provisions of the Factories Act 1937 have submitted to your authority lists of persons resident in your district who are engaged in their homes in carrying out work for factories. The lists established that 87 homeworkers are employed in various specified trades.

The tables submitted herewith relate to statistical information required by the Ministry of Labour & National Service and summarise the work of your officers in this sphere of administration.

1. Inspections Made for Provisions as to Health.

Premises	Number on Register	Inspec- tions	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	14	8	Nil	Nil
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.....	164	107	9	Nil
(3) Other Premises in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Authority(ex. out workers premises) ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total.....	178	115	9	Nil

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector.	By H.M. Inspector.	
Want of cleanliness.....	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Overcrowding.....	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Unreasonable temperature.	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Inadequate ventilation...	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Ineffective drainage of floors.....	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Sanitary Conveniences:-					
(a) Insufficient.....	2	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
(b) Unsuitable or defective.....	6	6	Nil	3	Nil
(c) Not separate for sexes.....	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork).....	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Totals.....	9	9	Nil	3	Nil

OUTWORK.

(Sections 110 and 111)

Nature of Work	No. of outworkers in August list required by Sec. 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists.	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises.	Notices served	Prosecutions
Wearing apparel Making etc.....	76	-	-	-	-	-
Lace, lace curtains and nets.	3	-	-	-	-	-
Umbrellas, etc.	8	-	-	-	-	-
Totals.....	87	-	-	-	-	-

Rag Flock.

The Rag Flock & Other Filling Materials Act, 1951, forbids the use of filling materials to which the Act applies for such purposes as upholstery and the stuffing of bedding, toys and baby carriages except on premises registered by a local authority. Standards of cleanliness of filling materials are given by Regulations and penalties are prescribed for using unclean materials.

Accordingly premises have been visited, records checked and samples of rag flock taken where deemed necessary. Generally, the filling materials were found to be identified with the British Standards Institution mark signifying that the filling materials comply with the prescribed standard of cleanliness.

The number of registered premises total nineteen. All the samples of filling material submitted for examination were found to conform to a satisfactory standard.

SECTION 'G'

MISCELLANEOUS.

Moveable Dwellings.

Shortage of housing accommodation, limited financial resources of persons and movement of civilian workers and servicemen from district to district are factors which make their contribution to caravan occupation.

In most cases the caravan is no more than a temporary substitute for a house and the limitations attached to such type of occupation soon reveal themselves.

The use of caravans for recreational pursuit purposes and for semi permanent housing accommodation have necessitated your Council reconciling these needs to housing and public health standards and protection of existing amenities. Work in this connection is related to the following data:-

Number of visits for inspection of sites and dwellings..	237
Number of licences issued.....	55
Caravans removed from site as a result of Council's intention to take formal action for contraventions.....	6
Number of licences refused.....	1

Registration of Dealers in Old Metal and Marine Stores.

Two new applications were approved during the year under review. The total registrations now number eight.

The National Assistance Act, 1948. Section 50.

Under Section 50 it is the responsibility of a local authority to arrange for the burial or cremation of any person who has died or been found dead in this area. The duty is exercisable only where it appears to the Council that no other suitable arrangements have been or are being made.

During the year 1955 your Council were called upon to arrange for the burial of two persons.

Pet Animals Act, 1951.

This Act regulates the sale of pet animals making provision for the licensing of pet animal shops and imposing conditions for the animals to be accommodated and cared for in a satisfactory manner.

One shop was licensed during the year under review.

The Heating Appliances (Fireguards) Regulations, 1953.

Your Authority are empowered to administer the provisions of these regulations designed to prevent the sale or letting of certain heating appliances not fitted with guards.

It has been found that new articles are now made so as to comply with the regulations.

Licensing of Game Dealers.

Two licences authorising dealers to buy and sell game were issued during the year.

Infectious Diseases.

Visits have been made in connection with cases of notifiable infectious diseases. Relevant information with regard to the history of the cases obtained and recorded, contacts checked and disinfection of rooms and bedding carried out. Details of the department's work is indicated below:-

Number of visits paid.....	69
Number of re-visits.....	27
Number of premises disinfected (tuberculosis).....	24
Number of premises disinfected (other infectious diseases).	22

CONCLUSION.

The eradication of every unfit house, safeguarding food supplies from contamination, ensuring wholesome water supplies, good sanitation and clean air are fundamental duties relating to a satisfactory standard of environmental hygiene.

Law relevant to these matters is often involved, complicated and ambiguous and administration is frequently made difficult on that account.

These shortcomings and the resulting frustrations often experienced only serve to emphasise the necessity for constant vigilance and sustained endeavour in order to safeguard and improve upon the standards of environmental hygiene we now enjoy.

